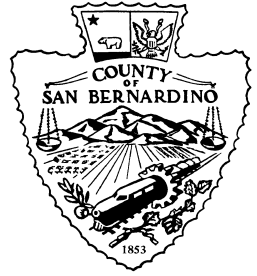


INTEROFFICE MEMO



DATE: MAY 5, 2003

PHONE: 387-5649

FROM: PETER R. HILLS
Fire Chief/Fire Warden
San Bernardino County Fire Department

MAIL CODE: 0450

TO: JOHN GOSS
Assistant Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: Request for Fire Season Supplemental Appropriation

Request

The San Bernardino County Fire Department is requesting a Supplemental Appropriation of \$1,317,000 for the 2003 Fire Season to allow additional staffing at eight (8) fire stations and the fire dozer that directly serve the San Bernardino Mountain communities.

Background

Due to the unprecedented tree mortality in our local mountains and the extreme fire danger, this office is requesting supplemental funding for staffing at specific fire stations during the 2003 fire season period. These stations are in the areas of greatest risk to our communities and will be of extreme value for initial attack suppression and support structure protection activities. If this staffing plan is approved, these resources will greatly enhance our ability to control any fire, support mutual aid activities between local government agencies, and leave adequate resources in place when state and federal resources are committed on other incidents.

Fire season typically runs from May into December, although these months can fluxuate based on fuel moisture and weather patterns for all types of fuels. This request is for six months, beginning July 1 and ending on December 31, 2003, and utilizes existing personnel, equipment and supplies. Listed below are the fire stations requiring additional staffing and related cost.

Fawnskin (Station 49)

Within the Bear Valley, only three other local government fire engines are staffed. The fulfilling of this request would provide a fourth staffed fire engine in the valley. The local fire chiefs are requesting six engines on initial dispatch for all fires due to the mountain's fire risk. Current staffing for this station is one company officer (captain or engineer) plus a limited term firefighter. This station covers an engine or ambulance, based on the call type, and relies on paid call firefighters to cover additional apparatus. The paid call company is unable to guarantee station coverage or additional engine responses during weekday hours. Our request is to daily staff the fire engine with a captain, engineer and limited term firefighter while maintaining ambulance staffing of a firefighter/paramedic and a limited term firefighter. This will increase daily staffing from two to five, for a net increase of three daily.

6 Month Cost

\$330,000

Lucerne Valley (Station 111)

The fulfilling of this request would provide a fifth engine to assist the Big Bear Valley and be of great value to fires originating in the northern part of the mountains. We have experienced many fires in this area that do threaten the communities of Baldwin Lake and Fawnskin. The local fire chiefs are requesting six engines on initial dispatched for all fires due to the mountain's fire risk. Current staffing for this station is one captain, one firefighter/paramedic and a limited term firefighter. This station covers the engine with the captain while a firefighter/paramedic and a limited term firefighter cover the ambulance. The paid call company is unable to guarantee station coverage or additional engine staffing. Our request is to staff the fire engine with a captain, engineer and limited term firefighter, while maintaining ambulance staffing of a firefighter/paramedic and a limited term firefighter. This will increase daily staffing from three to five, for a net increase of two daily.

6 Month Cost

\$189,000

Angelus Oaks (Station 15) & Forest Falls (Station 128)

On the eastern side of the San Bernardino Mountains there are two communities that have no fulltime staffing. Responses into these areas come from the paid call stations and are supported by fulltime crews from Mentone, Redlands and Yucaipa, which equates to a 20+ minute response. The paid call companies have difficulty with weekday coverage due to the community population working off the mountain, thus leaving this area very vulnerable. Our request is to hard cover the fire engine at

COUNTY FIRE

these stations for 10 hours a day with three PCF's. This will increase each stations daily staffing from zero to three for 10 hours per day, for a net increase of three for 10 hours daily.

6 Month Cost

\$110,000

Lake Arrowhead (Station 92)

The Lake Arrowhead area has been the hardest hit community on the mountain from the bark beetle tree mortality. The trees continue to die in this area at a rapid rate and any fire in this area will spread at rates that most firefighters have never experienced before. Fires not controlled within minutes will turn into major disasters and most likely affect homes and loss of lives. Our request is to staff an additional fire engine with a captain, engineer and a limited term firefighter, thus providing four engines for initial attack suppression efforts and the ability to provide mutual aid to Crest Forest and Running Springs Fire Departments without depleting resources in Lake Arrowhead. This will increase daily staffing from three to six, for a net increase of three daily.

6 Month Cost

\$350,000

Green Valley Lake (Station 129)

The community of Green Valley Lake has a PCF station and is one of the first fire engines into the backcountry, north of Green Valley Lake and Fawnskin. This community is fairly isolated and routinely asks for assistance from Arrowbear and Running Springs on all fires. Responses from these adjoining communities are approximately a 15+ minutes response. The paid call company has difficulty with weekday coverage due to community population working off the mountain, thus leaving this area very vulnerable. Our request is to hard cover the fire engine at this station for 10 hours a day with three PCF's. This will increase daily staffing from zero to three for 10 hours per day, for a net increase of three for 10 hours daily.

6 Month Cost

\$ 55,000

Wrightwood (Station 101)

Wrightwood has seen its share of fires during the past 5 years; these include the Narrows, Turtle, Blue Cut and Louisiana Fires. Wrightwood only has one staffed station for its community and must rely on support from the Phelan and Pinion Hills fire stations, which have a response time of 10+ minutes. Request for more than three local government engines must come from Hesperia, Victorville and Apple

COUNTY FIRE

Valley. This leaves this community vulnerable during initial attack fires and puts homes and property at risk. Current staffing for this station is one captain, one engineer/paramedic and a limited term firefighter. This station covers the engine with the captain while the engineer/paramedic and limited term firefighter cover the ambulance. The paid call company is unable to guarantee station coverage or additional engine staffing. Our request is to staff the fire engine with a captain, engineer and limited term firefighter while maintaining ambulance staffing of a firefighter/paramedic and a limited term firefighter. This will increase daily staffing from three to five, for a net increase of three daily.

6 Month Cost

\$178,000

Lytle Creek (Station 20)

The community of Lytle Creek has a PCF station and is one of the first fire engines into the surrounding canyons and is threatened every year by wildland fires. This community is fairly isolated and routinely asks for assistance from Devore, Fontana and Rialto on all fires. Responses from these adjoining communities are approximately a 12+ minutes response. The paid call company has difficulty with weekday coverage due to community population working off the mountain, thus leaving this area very vulnerable. Our request is to hard cover the fire engine at this station for 10 hours a day with three PCF's. This will increase daily staffing from zero to three for 10 hours per day, for a net increase of three for 10 hours daily.

6 Month Cost

\$ 55,000

Dozer Staffing

In 2000/01 budget year, the County General fund had provided the County Fire Department \$500,000 for providing county-wide urban-interface wildland fire protection. This original concept consisted of a fire dozer program, handcrew program and a fire/sheriff helicopter enhancement program but all money was later shifted to solely support the dozer program. We have operated this program through fiscal year 2002/03 and will be unable to continue as a dedicated program due to loss of funding. For the 2003 fire season, County Fire's dozer will be reduced to a "Call When Needed" status. This will delay emergency responses for the dozer to fires. Our request is to fund an operator assigned to the dozer program for six months. This will increase daily staffing from zero to one 4/10 work schedule, for a net increase of one.

6 Month Cost

\$50,000

COUNTY FIRE

Summary

If this proposed supplemental funding and staffing plan is approved, all positions would be filled using either overtime personnel, our existing PCF personnel, which will allow for down staffing during weather related periods. Also, this would enable fire suppression support across the mountain to County Fire areas and other Fire Districts without abandoning local community fire protection, ambulance, and emergency medical services. These additionally staffed resources would be kept in county and not available for out of county response. This increased staffing is for the protection of our communities, our residents and our visitors to our local mountains.

Total Request for Supplemental Appropriation	\$1,317,000
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